

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 3717 for the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services (MDCPS)
From: Craig P. Orgeron, Ph.D.
Date: October 4, 2016
Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications
Contact Name: Donna Hamilton
Contact Phone Number: 601-432-8114
Contact E-mail Address: Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov

RFP Number 3717 is hereby amended as follows:

1. Section II, Item 5 is being modified to read:

Original signatures are required on one copy of the Submission Cover Sheet and Configuration Summary, and the Vendor's original submission must be clearly identified as the original. ~~The Vendor's original proposal must include the Proposal Bond, (if explicitly required in Section IV).~~

2. Title page, INVITATION is modified as follows:

INVITATION: Sealed proposals, subject to the attached conditions, will be received at this office until ~~October 11, 2016~~ **October 13, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m. Central Time** for the acquisition of the products/services described below for the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services.

3. Title page, third box is modified as follows:

<p>PROPOSAL, SUBMITTED IN RESPONSE TO RFP NO. DUE October 11, 2016 October 13, 2016 @ 3:00 p.m., ATTENTION: Donna Hamilton</p>
--

4. **Section VII Technical Specifications, Item 3 Project Schedule is amended as follows:**

Task	Date
First Advertisement Date for RFP	08/30/16
Second Advertisement Date for RFP	09/06/16
Vendor Web Conference	10:00 a.m. Central Time on 09/07/16
Case Worker Web Conference	10:00 a.m. Central Time on 09/09/16
Deadline for Vendor's Written Questions	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 09/14/16
Deadline for Questions Answered and Posted to ITS Web Site	09/30/16
Open Proposals	3:00 p.m. Central Time on 10/11/16 10/13/16
Evaluation of Proposals	Begins 10/11/16 10/13/16
Approved Proposals Added to Agile Development Vendor Pool	10/26/16

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Page 6 Para 5 - Original signatures are required on one copy of the Submission Cover Sheet and Configuration Summary, and the Vendor's original submission must be clearly identified as the original.

We understand that the Proposal submission is to be made electronically. When it is an Email submission, identifying any copy as "Original" is not understood. Requesting the Government to clarify the mode of Response, and number of copies associated with it, please.

Response: **The requirement to mark a proposal as "Original" is not applicable for this RFP. Please see Amendment Item No. 1 above.**

Question 2: Also, the instructions say about Original signatures. Does it mean signed on a Cover Letter, that is scanned & converted as soft copy?

Response: **Yes. See Section VII, Item 6.2.1.**

Question 3: Could the Government please let us know the Duration (Base year + Option years) that is expected out of this Contract?

Response: **See Section VII, Item 4.5.**

Question 4: There was a Pre-Proposal Conference held. We could not attend this. Does it stop us from bidding this RFP? (Was the Pre-Proposal Conference a mandatory one?)

Response: **No. Neither the Vendor Web Conference nor the Case Worker Web Conference were mandatory.**

Question 5: Requesting the Government to share the Contract Value (Budget set-aside) for the work under Solicitation. Also, whether it is funded already.

Response: **The State anticipates multiple awards from this Agile Development Services Vendor Pool; and, therefore, does not have a specific budget set aside. Budget information for all State Agencies, including MDCPS, is available at www.lbo.ms.gov.**

Question 6: We are Minority Business and fall under the category of MBE. But, never did business with the State of MS. Kindly guide us, filling the Self-Certification form that is provided and FAXing it to the given authority would suffice for us to claim MBE status?"

Response: **Please see Section VI, Item 1.2 for instructions on submitting the Minority Self-Certification form.**

Question 7: 8.4 - The RFP asks for hourly rates, should vendors interpret this to mean that all LOC's will be offered as Time and Materials contracts, or may the State release them as Fixed Price contracts as well?

Response: **No; Yes.**

Question 8: Attachment A - The RFP lists a number of open source tools and technologies throughout the Labor Descriptions. Should we interpret these tools as preferred by the State or are they merely examples and other similar open source tools and technologies are equally acceptable to the State?

Response: **The tools are provided as examples.**

Question 9: Section II, Item 9 - The RFP states, "Vendors must provide their hourly rates as instructed Section X, *Cost Information Submission*. Costs will be solicited on a project-by-project basis during the next five years through the Letter of Configuration (LOC) process as defined in Section VIII.

Should the vendor assume that the rates in Section in the Cost form will be used for all future LOC procurements or will the State entertain discounts from vendors during the LOC procurements off of the published rates in the Cost table?

What Term should the vendor consider for the labor rates?

Response: **The rates will be used to determine the total cost for future LOCs. The State will entertain discounts from Vendors during the LOC process. Vendors are**

also allowed to propose an escalation rate as explained in Section X, Cost Information Submission. As stated in Section VII, Item 4.5 the proposals received in response to RFP No. 3717 will be used for 5 years.

Question 10: Section VII, Item 15 Scoring Methodology - It does not appear that cost is considered in the scoring methodology outlined in Section 15. Is this correct?

Response: **Correct. At this stage, Vendors are being evaluated on the items noted in Section VII, Item 15.1.4.**

Question 11: Section VII, Item 8.1 Scope - The scope of this RFP is limited to selecting a pool of vendors to provide Agile delivery services. Are we correct in interpreting that the State will be acting as the System Integrator for all LOC's issued under this RFP?

Response: **The State will be responsible for defining and ordering the new modules to be developed, including the management of module integration and implementation, working with the selected vendor(s). There is no "systems integrator" role defined as part of the agile methodology which is required by the State.**

Question 12: Section VII, Item 8.5 - This section notes that it is the vendor's responsibility to make sure that the vendor is capable of supplying the services as detailed in the LOC. On the vendor conference call, it was noted that there is no set time for when the first LOC will be released, but that it would be likely be within 90-120 days.

From what point is the 90-120 days measured?

Does the State have a more detailed roadmap that it is willing to share with vendors so that we can make sure that we are planning the capability to supply the services requested?

Response: **The State does not have a detailed roadmap that it can share with vendors at this time. LOCs will be released to the approved Agile Vendor Pool vendors beginning in the first quarter of 2017.**

Question 13: Section VII, Item 8.2 - The labor categories included do not seem to include the skill sets required to prepare operational and statistical reports that are typically required from a child welfare system and appear to be required by the consent decree.

Is this a correct interpretation? If so, should the vendors conclude that the State will either complete this work themselves or make arrangements for this work through another RFP? If not, will you please elaborate on which role will be responsible for operational and statistical reports?

Response: **The State will be responsible for providing the needed resources to develop and maintain any operational or statistical reports. If it is determined that additional skilled resources are needed in the future, those resources will be obtained at that time.**

Question 14: 8.2 - The labor categories included do not seem to include the services typically provided by data management resources (such as a Database Administrator, data warehouse developers, Business Intelligence, or federal report developers, etc.) to comply with CCWIS data management requirements. Is this interpretation correct?

If not, which role(s) would be responsible for data management responsibilities? If this interpretation is correct, should the vendors assume that the State will provide these services or make arrangements for this work through another RFP?

Response: The State will be responsible for providing the needed data management resources to comply with any Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) data management requirements. If it is determined that additional skilled resources are needed in the future, those resources will be obtained at that time.

Question 15: Section VII, Item 8.2 - The labor categories included do not seem to include skills necessary to provide data conversion services. Should we interpret this to mean that conversion will not be part of the plan for the development of the new system? If so, does the State have a more detailed Road Map that would explain how the application will be built so that it will not require data conversion? If not, will the State either take responsibility for conversion or make arrangements for this work through another RFP?

Response: The State will be responsible for providing the needed data conversion services. If it is determined that additional skilled resources are needed in the future, those resources will be obtained at that time.

Question 16: Section VII, Item 8.2 - The labor categories included do not seem to include the skills necessary to lead or assist with the organizational change management effort typically associated with the implementation of large Enterprise systems like a CCWIS. Does the State feel that organizational change management is not required for this project? If not, should we assume that the State will take responsibility for this task or make arrangement for these services through another RFP?

Response: The State will be responsible for providing the needed resources to lead and assist with the organizational change management effort. If it is determined that additional skilled resources are needed in the future, those resources will be obtained at that time.

Question 17: Section VIII, Item 3.1 - The RFP notes that some LOC's may require warranties. This RFP does not include language that will govern warranty of software or services. Should we assume that each LOC will require a full negotiation period to consider issues like warranty?

Response: The State is not able to determine at this point whether these items would be necessary for a specific project. Item 3.1 is included to inform Vendors that additional items other than product/cost could be required and the State would include those items in an LOC if necessary. Vendors would have an opportunity to respond to these items in their proposal and negotiate.

Question 18: Section VII, Item 8.2 - The labor categories included do not seem to include the skills necessary to complete the training effort typically required as part of a CCWIS. Is this a correct interpretation? If not, can you please highlight the role(s) that would be responsible for creating and delivering training services? If this interpretation is correct, does the State feel that training will not be required for this implementation? If the State does anticipate training will be required, will the State take responsibility for the training or arrange for it through another RFP?

Response: **The State will be responsible for providing the needed resources to lead and assist with the training effort. If it is determined that additional skilled resources are needed in the future, those resources will be obtained at that time.**

Question 19: Page 13, section 7.3 - According to the Administration for Children and Families (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/im1104.pdf>), "If a contract includes a liability clause, the Children's Bureau (CB) recommends that Agencies limit the vendor's liability to direct damages according to industry standards or an amount not to exceed 1.5 times the total contract cost." This sentence contains a recommendation from the Children's Bureau regarding vendor liability. Will the State enforce this clause? Please clarify.

Response: **Refer to RFP No. 3717, Section IV – Legal and Contractual Information (7. Mandatory Legal Provisions), and Section V – Proposal Exceptions. Vendors are encouraged to include any or all exceptions in their proposal response. Only exceptions itemized in the vendor's proposal response will be entertained during contract negotiations. Refer to Section I – Submission Cover Sheet & Configuration Summary.**

Question 20: General - Can the State provide any insight into the total budget for Child Welfare modernization or for the budget for each RFO?

Response: **The State anticipates multiple awards from this Agile Development Services Vendor Pool; and, therefore, does not have a specific budget set aside. Budget information for all State Agencies, including MDCPS, is available at www.lbo.ms.gov.**

Question 21: General - Can the State provide any insight into the planned size of the vendor pool?

Response: **The State does not have any preferences for the Vendor pool size.**

Question 22: Page 42, Section 8 - Can the State provide any insight into the planned business areas that will be addressed with each Letter of Configuration (LOC)?

Can the State provide the sequence and timing for each LOC?

Response: The State plans to release multiple Letter of Configurations (LOCs) for the development of the functional business modules to support a compliant Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). These modules include, but are not limited to, the following business functions: Intake; Investigation; Case; Resource; Person; Eligibility; Financial; Court; Common; Shared; Worker; Vendor; Interfaces; and Reporting. The sequence and timing of each LOC is not available at this time.

Question 23: Section IV, Item 29 -The state requires that all licenses are perpetual unless otherwise stated by vendor. Given this RFP does not contain an LOC that would involve the proposal of software we understand these exceptions will apply to specific LOCs. Can the state please confirm?

Response: Yes. Future LOCs are extensions of RFP No. 3717. Vendors must note any exceptions to the requirements contained in RFP No. 3717 in their response. Only exceptions itemized in the Vendor's proposal response will be entertained during contract negotiations. In addition, Vendors will have an opportunity to note exceptions to each specific LOC in their LOC response.

Question 24: Section IV, item 17 - If a vendor does not propose a subcontractor as part of the response to this RFP, will vendor have the ability to propose subcontractor(s) in response to the subsequent LOCs?

Response: Yes. As indicated in Section IV, Item 17, the State reserves the right of refusal and the right to request replacement of a subcontractor due to unacceptable work or conduct. The Vendor's commitments are binding on all subcontractors.

Question 25: Section IV, Item 17 - If a vendor does propose a subcontract as part of this RFP response, is the vendor bound to use the subcontractor in submission of responses to subsequent LOCs?

Response: No.

Question 26: Section VI, Item 10 - Is SAM registration required for contractors who don't have federal contracts?

Response: Yes. All primary vendors must include a copy of their SAM registration with their RFP response.

Question 27: Section V/Section II *SUBMISSION COVER SHEET & CONFIGURATION SUMMARY* - Given that the standard contract is not included as part of this RFP, will vendors who are included in the pool have the opportunity to take exceptions, if necessary?

Response: Yes. Please see the response to Question No. 23.

Question 28: Section III, item 17 - The RFP indicates that the state may substitute a new product into the mix and require the vendor to integrate with it for the same price and timeframe. Given that the substitution could happen at any time in the contract,

require significant rework, etc. this could create project risk and significant expense. Will the state remove this requirement?

Response: **No. The State reserves the right to procure products identified by the Vendor from the method that represents the most economical option for the State.**

Question 29: Section IV, item 29 - The state requires that all licenses are perpetual unless otherwise stated by vendor. Given this RFP does not contain a LOC that would involve the proposal of software we understand these exceptions will apply to specific LOCs. Can the state please confirm?

Response: **See the response to Question No. 23.**

Question 30: During the initial call the state said that the vendor being onsite is a requirement for any projects. Would that be for the entire duration of a project, or would the state be open to a hybrid approach whereby the vendor is onsite for critical aspects of the project (e.g. discovery, major releases etc.), but some portion of the development can be performed remotely (but still onshore)?

Response: **The State will allow for a hybrid approach whereby the vendor team members work in a distributed manner within the United States, with onsite presence being required only for critical aspects of the project as defined. The State plans to embed its key personnel into the development team(s) and reserves the right to require onsite presence of all vendor team members if communication and collaboration is negatively impacted by the hybrid approach. Vendors electing the hybrid approach will be required to provide video and telephonic conference services to facilitate the communication and collaboration among the distributed team(s).**

Question 31: Does a contractor company need approval from ITS for hiring third party consultants?
If yes, at what stage should need permission from ITS, time of RFP response OR with LOC response OR after contract award time?

Response: **Yes. Vendors will be required to include all subcontractor and third party consultant participation as part of their LOC response. In addition, vendors should seek permission from ITS on any subcontractor or third party consultant change during the contract period. The State reserves the right of refusal and the right to request replacement of any subcontractor or third party consultant.**

Question 32: In Section XI, References are mandatory or optional only for scoring purpose?

Response: **References are required and will be evaluated.**

Question 33: If our company did not participate in the September 9 meeting, is there a video or audio recording of the meeting so that we can hear what the Caseworkers expressed as requirements for the new tool?

Response: **Yes. See Amendment No. 2 posted 9/13/16 at <http://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/rfps/3717%20amend%202.pdf>.**

Question 34: In order to effectively conduct a research phase, is there a database of caseworkers that we can contact to inquire on what would be ideal components for the new tool?

Response: No. Vendors may listen to the Case Worker Q&A held Friday, September 9, 2016 by downloading the instructions provided at <http://www.its.ms.gov/procurement/rfps/3717%20amend%202.pdf>.

Question 35: We're bidding on 3717. Can we please get a copy of the security policy for the state?

Response: Vendors may obtain a copy of the Enterprise Security Policy by submitting a request to donna.hamilton@its.ms.gov.

Question 36: Is CPS considering an extension of the Oct 11 due date. If not is there a formal process to make such a request?

Response: CPS is extending the Proposal Due Date to October 13, 2016 due to a delay in responding to Vendor Questions. No other extensions will be granted.

RFP responses are due October 13, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Donna Hamilton at 601-432-8114 or via email at Donna.Hamilton@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 40123